

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claim 3, 4, 6-11, 13 and 14 as indicated below. Matter that has been deleted from a claim is indicated by strike through and matter that has been added to a claim is indicated by underlining.

Claims 1-2. (Withdrawn)

Claim 3. (Currently amended). In a method for quantitating an analyte by measuring time resolved transfer of fluorescence energy to or from a label quantitatively associated with the analyte, the improvement comprising measuring the energy transferred from donor compounds having the ability to absorb light energy and then transfer this energy to cross-linked allophycocyanin in a time-resolved manner, where the cross-linked allophycocyanin ~~used according to this invention~~ used has not been exposed to strongly chaotropic agents after cross-linking.

Claim 4. (Currently amended). The method of claim ~~2 or~~ 3, wherein the donor ~~molecule~~ compounds comprises a metal.

Claim 5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the metal is a lanthanide series metal.

Claim 6. (Currently amended) The method of claim 5, wherein the lanthanide metal is selected from the group consisting of europium-~~or~~ and ruthenium, which may optionally be chelated or in a cryptate.

Claim 7. (Currently amended) The method of ~~any one~~ claims of ~~1-3~~ 1-3, wherein non-cross-linked monomeric subunits have not been removed from the cross-linked allophycocyanin molecule.

Claim 8. (Currently amended) The method of ~~any one of~~ claims 1-3, wherein the cross-linked allophycocyanin preparation has at least 20% but less than 50% of all alpha subunits of the allophycocyanin molecules linked to no more than one beta subunit.

Claim 9. (Currently amended) The method of ~~any one of~~ claims 1-3, wherein the cross-linked allophycocyanin has an absorbance spectrum characterized by a ratio of areas under the absorbance spectrum between 500-700 nm to the area between 250-300 nm of at least 4.

Claim 10. (Currently amended) The method of ~~any one of~~ claims 2-~~or~~ 3, wherein said method is performed in homogeneous solution or suspension.

Claim 11. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2-~~or~~ 3, wherein at least two distinct donor species are present, said distinct donor species having different fluorescence lifetimes.

Claim 12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein said distinct donor species absorb at the same wavelength.

Claim 13. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2-~~or~~ 3, wherein at least two distinct donor species are present, said distinct donor species having different absorption spectrum.

Claim 14. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2-~~or~~ 3, wherein at least two distinct donor species are present, said distinct donor species forming donor/acceptor pairs having the same lifetime and color but being distinguishable by fluorescent intensity.